

Meeting Minutes

Design Review Committee

Regular Meeting

July 23, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

Public Works and Development Services

South Atrium Conference Room

215 E. Buffalo Street, Chandler, AZ



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Heumann at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Committee Attendance

Chair Rick Heumann

Vice Chair Sherri Koshiol

Committee Member Kyle Barichello

Committee Member Rene Lopez

Committee Member Charlotte Golla

Committee Member Ryan Schwarzer

Staff Attendance

Kevin Mayo, Planning Administrator

David de la Torre, Planning Manager

Lauren Schumann, Principal Planner

Alisa Petterson, Senior Planner

Darsy Omer, Associate Planner

Taylor Manemann, Associate Planner

Thomas Allen, Assistant City Attorney

Julie San Miguel, Clerk

Absent

Committee Member Mike Quinn - Excused

Discussion

1. PLH23-0065 MAGNOLIA

Request Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) for housing product for a 93-lot subdivision, located ¼ mile east of Cooper Road and Riggs Road.

DARSY OMER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER introduced the project and explained that it was approved in March 2022 for a PAD subdivision layout of 93 lots ranging from 10,000 to 16,000 square feet. She further explained that a PDP for housing type is required, and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the architecture. She presented the Residential Development Standards created in 2002, stating that the purpose of the guidelines is to assist with the design and diversity of residential

homes within Chandler. She stated the objective of the document is to induce design, diversity, amenity, and innovation into production homes and subdivisions. She further stated the Residential Development Standards are split into two sections: subdivision, which establishes subdivision elements; and production home, which establishes architectural diversity elements. She presented the architectural diversity element chart as a guideline for the committee to understand the requirements of a fully developed housing product. She pointed out the sections staff wished to focus; four-sided architecture for each portion of the building visible from arterial street, deemphasized garage fronts, front doors to courtyard entries visible from the street, and the use of a variety of roofing, colors, textures, and shapes. She stated staff's recommendations for focusing on the sections are to elevate the design. She explained staff would like to see significant architectural style differences, distinctive architectural details on all elevations, the addition of features such as covered front porches, covered entries, door/window details, and roof features. She presented the three architectural styles proposed and stated staff received updated renderings the prior week and presented them to the Committee Members. She pointed out how the architectural style is lacking push and pull, variations in height, and detail. She presented examples of modern homes in the valley to illustrate the quality and variety expected, pointing out how the examples demonstrate diversity in height, emphasis of vertical elements, garages that were not the main feature of the architecture, and the use of multiple colors and materials on each home. She stated staff found that the proposal did not match the city's requirement for the high quality or diversity in design and were missing necessary elements.

CHAIR HEUMANN sought clarification on the images presented and asked if these were examples or suggestions.

DARSY OMER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER explained the split image presented are examples of homes found around the Phoenix Metro area for modern inspiration. She emphasized that these examples illustrate higher quality materials and diversity of materials. She pointed out how the proposed style is mainly stucco and missing diversity in color, material, and height. She explained staff pulled recommendations from the Residential Development Standards and presented three images to illustrate design that is fully developed. She stated staff recommends the materials be placed in a different way to make the elevations look finished. She presented images from a Shea Homes subdivision in Arcadia and explained it is staff's recommendation to deemphasize the garage as it is used as a main feature of every home in the proposed subdivision. She presented staff's next recommendation for the front door courtyard entry to be visible from street and pointed out how the proposed front entryway is hidden. She explained staff's recommendation for four-sided architecture, especially for portions of the building visible from arterial Street and throughout the subdivision. She presented an image of proposed elevations and pointed out how the architecture was lacking continuity of materials on all sides and how stone features are only seen on the front elevation. She further stated staff's recommends for the Applicant use a variety of colors, textures, and different roof pitches to add interest to the elevations. She stated staff's last recommendation is to provide distinctive architectural details on all elevations, such as, covered front porches, doors/window details, different roof pitches, the use of interesting

materials, to comply with residential diversity standards. Staff finds the proposed product does not appear finished planning to implement these recommendations.

CHAIR HEUMANN asked if staff's recommendations were to build specifically what shown in the presentation or some of the elements.

DARSY OMER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER stated the purpose of the images presented were to give ideas of elements to add based on the recommendations of staff.

COMMITTEE MEMBER BARICHELLO sought clarification on the point system that was presented, he asked if it was still applied or if this was only done in 2002.

DARSY OMER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER stated in this specific instance staff was using the criteria to ensure that the proposal met the intent behind the Residential Diversity Development Standards.

DAVID DE LA TORRE, PLANNING MANAGER pointed out the Residential Development Standards includes an exception for subdivisions with lots that are 10,000 square feet or larger. He explained since this subdivision has 10,000 square foot lots and larger, the point system is not applied rather, its intent is applied.

CHAIR HEUMANN stated when the standards were created in 2002, the idea was that larger lots would have more features and these concepts were more applicable to the smaller lots who needed more support.

COMMITTEE MEMBER SCHWARZER asked if the intent of the stars on the slide were to show the standards currently being met.

DARSY OMER, ASSOCIATE PLANNER clarified the stars on the slide indicate areas where the proposed was lacking.

CHAIR HEUMANN confirmed there were no further questions or comments from the Committee Members for staff and asked the Applicant to address the issues brought up by staff.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT thanked the Committee Members for their time and stated he has a brief presentation before getting into the design. He presented details of the site stating that it is one of the last residential development subdivisions in the city and that it had first come through in 2002, making it unique. He presented the site plan of 93 lots stating that the layout will impact the discussion this date as there is focus on appearance from arterial streets. He advised that historically cases have stipulations concerning visibility from arterial streets, even stipulations within the development itself that the same elevations cannot be built side by side. He stated the Residential Development Standards mentioned in staff's presentation were adopted in 2002 and were never intended to be a point system or scorecard, even for smaller lots, and the standards

were meant to guide the direction of development. He referred to the section on architectural diversity, emphasizing that the last sentence of the first paragraph stated that these standards did not apply to lots 10,000 square feet or greater. He pointed out when discussing larger lots, the standard is more of a spirit than guidelines and the interpretation of good design varies based on individual perspective. He presented a split image of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa and Michelangelo's The Last Judgement. He explained that an endless debate can be held to determine which is better, but it is subjective and up to individual interpretation. He explained the slides in the Committee's packet were meant to convey the design intent, despite differences in modern architecture interpretation. He noted the intent is to incorporate elements from higher-end custom homes into more affordable homes, still portraying elements of quality. He mentioned instead of picking at the design, his focus is to show the importance theme and where it originated. He stated that the purpose of the softer drawings in the Committee's packet was to convey depth, texture, and the overall feel of the design, which might be lost in the renderings. He acknowledged the push and pull occurring on the site, might not be in the format that staff is used to seeing with traditional architectural styles like Spanish farmhouse or prairie. He presented slides to show real-world photos of what the proposed would look like, he pointed out features like floor-to-ceiling glass entries and the use of different materials. He presented physical boards to show the materials that will be used and stressed the importance of being able to touch and feel the materials to provide a better understanding of the design. He concluded by respectfully disagreeing with staff's regarding the quality of the proposed homes, stating the Applicants believe the homes meet the spirit and intent of the guidelines. He acknowledged that when the guidelines were written in 2002, Chandler was experiencing significant growth. He stated the quality of the proposed homes is evident, and Shea Homes has a reputation as one of the top builders in the country because of their high-quality developments.

CHAIR HEUMANN recalled being shown materials during a meeting with the Applicant and asked about the optional elements in the designs. He asked which elements would be standard and which are optional with an upcharge. He presented concern that the housing product will end up with a bunch of basic features instead of high-quality elements shown in the presentation.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT clarified that "optional" referred to features that were optional for the interior, not the exterior. He presented floorplan 6001 and explained the optional stone is meant for the interior that would be visible through the glass, but it was not an exterior feature.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LOPEZ asked if the wall on the inside of the window is where the stone will be used.

ADAM TRACY, APPLICANT clarified the optional stone is an architectural feature within the livable space and would only be visible through the window. He stated in this particular elevation, the open entry features floor-to-ceiling 10-foot glazing with the door set into it. He stated the optional stone is an interior feature that is visible through the glass and wherever the stone is not marked as optional, it is a standard exterior element that Shea Homes will implement.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT presented floorplan 6002 and explained the stone veneer was a standard feature and the enhanced garage doors are also standard elements. He added the siding doors and other features were standard on all floorplans, thus emphasizing the variety of materials and diversity between the respective elevations.

CHAIR HEUMANN asked if everyone understood the information and pointed out large blank spaces in the design. He stated that it seemed rather flat and unexciting and inquired about how they could add more visual interest, as the front of the building had many features.

SCOTT CARSON, APPLICANT introduced himself as an architect with 25 years of experience. He highlighted the importance of shape and shadow on a building and mentioned that even a blank wall can change throughout the day as the sun moved across it, creating dynamic visual effects. He stated if a video could be shown to demonstrate how the sun interacts with the building, with shadow lines throughout the day, it would help others understand the impact of these design elements. He further stated the recessed garage doors and insets in the gables contribute to a powerful overall visual effect, which would vary throughout the day and year.

CHAIR HEUMANN acknowledged the points raised and noted that on the south side, where the sun is more prevalent, there might be some issues.

SCOTT CARSON, APPLICANT clarified even on the north side, there would be sunlight in the summertime. He stated that sun studies would prove that each elevation of the buildings would receive some sunlight at different times of the year. He emphasized that natural elements would create the desired diversity in the street scene without adding unnecessary elements that could detract from the building's simplicity.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LOPEZ mentioned the importance of simple landscaping, such as adding a palm tree to frame the building's profile.

CHAIR HEUMANN clarified they are discussing individual landscaping, not community landscaping.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT confirmed the landscaping will be controlled by Shea Homes, with specific packages installed to complement both the architecture and the overall community aesthetic.

CHAIR HEUMANN asked if these landscaping options would be included in the packet for review by the Commission.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT confirmed that examples could be provided; however, landscaping is typically not a factor in housing approval processes based on his experience.

CHAIR HEUMANN acknowledged that it is not typical and presented statement of the importance of landscape elements in changing the overall appearance of the front end of a property as stated by the Applicant.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT agreed and stated they would compile examples and optional packages to present to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

COMMITTEE MEMBER BARICHELLO pointed out the garage doors on the project and stated that the garage door quality plays a significant role in the overall look of the building. He stated if there is a commitment to high-quality garage doors specific to the home's design, he felt that the concerns about too much garage would be addressed.

CHAIR HEUMANN agreed with Committee Member Barichello and pointed out that the high-quality garage doors must be a standard and not a costly option.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT clarified the standard garage doors were featured in the packet, with options including both solid and glass designs, which had a frosted look.

CHAIR HEUMANN confirmed these garage options were standard and did not cost extra.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LOPEZ pointed out that garage doors have evolved significantly since 2002, contributing positively to design and stated that a well-designed garage door could be an artistic enhancement rather than a detractor. He further pointed out how the hidden front door could give an experience as one is walking into the home and presented statements regarding different heights.

KEVIN MAYO, PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR pointed out that the guidelines were not meant to be prescriptive but were intended to ensure a certain level of quality and diversity in design. He explained the intent of the recommendation regarding the front door is to ensure visibility and security, particularly to make them more intuitive and accessible from the street. He further pointed out that the city will not regulate landscaping in a PDP to ensure trees enhance building design by breaking up stucco wall.

CHAIR HEUMANN noted that while the guidelines were essential, they were not set in stone and were meant to adapt as things changed over time as they were originally written in 1995 and rewritten in 2002. He emphasized the design elements evolve over time and that evolution has ultimately brought quality to the city.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LOPEZ asked about the pitch of the roof and whether it could be varied to add more interest to the designs.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT stated that changes could be made but it would require careful consideration to maintain the overall design integrity and asked if they could revisit the roof pitch as part of a broader discussion on elevation styles.

CHAIR HEUMANN pointed out that they have been viewing the same elevation for quite some time and asked the Applicant to present more images of the different housing product.

KEVIN MAYO, PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR sought clarification asking if the current image presented adhered to the direction from the Planning and Zoning Commission. He pointed out in the current elevation being reviewed, the right element was predominantly stucco with zero articulation and asked if the Committee Members were satisfied with this design and if it met the intent of the Residential Development Standards.

CHAIR HEUMANN stated he believed it aligned with the general guidelines. He suggested the meeting proceed by take a closer look at each product and give feedback. He pointed out that ultimately it comes down to quality and the established standards.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT presented 6004 elevation and stated that the left side appears similar while the right side was markedly different, including the addition of a roof pitch at the back.

CHAIR HEUMANN pointed out that this plan has more diversification in character compared to the previous image presented.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT stated that is the beauty of this plan, it is the diversity, particularly in the modern elements. He acknowledged the feedback about increasing verticality and the Applicants will consider this as they reviewed the design.

CHAIR HEUMANN stated that a typical stipulation is that the same elevation not be next to or adjacent from each other.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT stated this is a stipulation that is expected and presented more images of different floor plans. He pointed out the differences, articulation, and variety in roof pitches between the valley and transitional. He presented several images of different elevations and asked if there were any details the Committee would like to discuss in depth.

VICE CHAIR KOSHIOL asked a question if Shea Homes would self-regulate in terms of elevations or color schemes.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT confirmed Shea Homes self-regulates in all their communities, to ensure the same house and elevation were never built next door or directly across the street. He stated that this has always been their standard and is a common requirement in many

municipalities with design review processes and Shea Homes believes this is the right approach for the community.

VICE CHAIR KOSHIOL asked whether Shea Homes had implemented these three styles in other communities.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT confirmed the use of the modern and transitional design in other municipalities. He mentioned while they had versions of the valley, this exact elevation and floor plan was unique. He stated that these styles have been successful in high-end communities like Paradise Valley and Scottsdale. He expressed pride in the quality of architecture and stated this will be another successful community as the focus is on quality materials rather than quantity.

VICE CHAIR KOSHIOL mentioned from a buyer's perspective, she felt that the styles offered appears to be high quality and aligned with Chandler's design standard. She stated that she could see these styles being popular with buyers, given the trends in other communities. She asked the Applicant if they were confident in buyers gravitating towards the home products they are providing.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT stated Shea Homes is confident in the proposed styles and design as they have had extensive focus groups and feedback across the Valley. He stated that people want something different, fresh, and something they could be proud of. He mentioned that homes starting at a million dollars have buyers who value distinctive architecture, and this is as evidenced by the success Shea Homes has had in similar high-end communities.

ADAM KOSTIS, APPLICANT explained Shea Homes uses a collaborative process particularly with architects from other high-end communities. He stated while focus groups provide useful insights, the real proof of what people prefer comes when they commit financially. He stated this latest evolution was shaped by feedback from new residents moving into the state who are seeking a particular architectural style. He pointed out how verticality plays an important role in creating a sense of hierarchy at the entrance, which guides people to where they should go. He further explained that over time with modern architecture that it's less about verticality and more about horizontal elements. He pointed out how the horizontal surfaces extend outward and how the entry features a canopy or overhang that is at least six feet long, with a ceiling treatment that moves from outdoor to indoor. He stated this design element, where the ceiling treatment transitions from the outdoor to the indoor space, is provocative and appealing to clients when they walk into the homes.

CHAIR HEUMANN questioned the sustainability of these designs and mentioned that trends come and go. He asked whether the high-end homes in other areas, such as Phoenician, maintained their value.

BRENNAN RAY, APPLICANT stated these features and styles have timeless characteristics and pointed out how the design reminded him of classic elements seen in older neighborhoods in Phoenix. He presented statements regarding Mona Lisa and Last Judgment and further stated that simplicity can be beautiful. He explained in the area where this property is located, he believed the design is sustainable, fitting, and appropriate. He pointed out how the design integrates with the broader landscape and is well-suited for both the property and the community.

CHAIR HEUMANN pointed out how all the homes in the community are single story.

TRACY FINLEY, APPLICANT explained that Shea Homes chose to build single-story homes, despite the option to build two-story, as they felt it was the most attractive and appealing choice for the community and its neighbors. He pointed out across the street from this community is an older Shea Homes community and that the Applicant has developed several communities in Chandler over the years and the resale values are higher than competitors. He explained the higher resale is due to their commitment to using high-quality materials that have longevity and their sustainable design.

COMMITTEE MEMBER LOPEZ pointed out that the designs offer variety by introducing a different portfolio and for buyers who prefer traditional Spanish ranch-style homes, there are plenty of options already available.

COMMITTEE MEMBER GOLLA commented on how she was initially drawn to the designs and that it reflects current market preferences. She acknowledged the importance of design review standards especially for communities on arterial streets and pointed out the proposed community is gated. She stated that she is excited to see this come to Chandler as these are types of design that are seen in Arcadia and Central Phoenix, and this will attract buyers who might otherwise look elsewhere.

COMMITTEE MEMBER SCHWARZER pointed out from the street perspective when the homes are viewed together, they display good diversity. He further pointed out that some have a seemingly plain stucco wall, but they gained character when placed alongside others. He suggested the use of landscaping to further enhanced the overall appearance.

CHAIR HEUMANN stated the key take away is that the Commission Members feel that the quality is evident. He thanked and praised the efforts of the staff and Shea Homes in addressing concerns. He pointed out standard features like the enhanced garage doors are a significant aspect to the design's appeal. He further pointed out that seeing the elevations drawn the old-fashioned way, showed more of a contrast and definition to the lines. He suggested when the Applicant comes before Planning and Zoning Commission that they consider the feedback received this date and collaborate with staff and any other relevant parties.

Member Comments/Announcements

None.

Calendar

The next meeting of the Design Review Committee will be scheduled as needed.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Mayo" with a stylized flourish.

Kevin Mayo, Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Heumann" with a stylized flourish.

Rick Heumann, Chair